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the honor to know. We shall look with much interest for the second series, which will afford the author better subjects for his biography, and which he will probably bring down to our own times.

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ART. VIII. — *Tancred, or the New Crusade, a Novel.*

By B. D'ISRAELI, M. P., Author of "Coningsby," "Sibyl," "The Young Duke," &c., &c. Philadelphia : Carey & Hart. 1847. 8vo. pp. 127.

THE world of the conventional novel is peculiar and apart. It lies somewhere in the same parallels with the land of Cockaigne and the Paradise of Fools. It cannot be far from that district of Spain so thickly dotted with castles erected by non-resident proprietors. The Barbary coast of the piratical cheap-reprinters lies within easy sail of it. Its existence is religiously believed in by thousands who would contemptuously overwhelm one with scientific confutations of the reality of the Lycanthropi and Patagonians. To those whose broad views of life are taken from the speculative heights of the boarding-school attic, or from behind the isolating rampart of the circulating-library counter, it is far more real than Boston or Cambridge. To them, the manners and customs, the language, costume, and diet, of its inhabitants are more familiar than those of their own neighbours and fellow-citizens. The shameful gibbet of the upturned nose is erected at once for such unworthy persons as are ignorant of its politics and morals. Yet is it a land of comparatively recent discovery. What we know of it is due wholly to modern science and energy. Hackluyt and Purchas are quite vacant in regard to it. We search for it vainly in any *Orbis Depictus*. Peter Martyr tells strange stories, but has described no nation so peculiar. It may possibly have formed part of Mercator's projection, but with him it went no farther than a mere projection, if so far. There is no mention of it in Harris or Pinkerton. Even the voluminous Mavor, the delight of our boyhood, caught sight of it, if ever, only from some Pisgah's top.

The most accurate delineation of it may be found in the works of Bulwer and D'Israeli. Dickens, for a writer of novels, is shamefully uninformed in this particular; Mr. Monks, in *Oliver Twist*, is the only one of his characters who gives us any direct hint that he is aware of its existence. In general, they impress us as the acting of Garrick did the disappointed and indignant Partridge. We need not look into novels for such; we can meet them every day in the street. It is to the two distinguished authors above named, then, that we are indebted for whatever precise knowledge we have gleaned of this *terra incognita*. Not that they have enriched us with a professedly exact and minute description of it. We must construct our theory of its social peculiarities, as we recreate the private life of the Greeks, from the incidental *data* let fall by those in whose eyes objects had lost their sharp outline by familiarity. So much of preface seemed necessary to excuse the too evident incompleteness of our sketch.

The first peculiar characteristic of the inhabitants of this shadowy region is their longevity. They realize what was, at best, only theoretic with Pythagoras. This antediluvian prolixity is accompanied, and perhaps deprived of its monotony, by a Cerberus-like capacity of being several gentlemen at once. Thus, the identical False Messiah of the "Wonderous Tale of Alroy" turns up again, after several centuries of withdrawal into private life, in the person of Vivian Grey. Again we encounter him, with scarcely even an attempt at *incognito*, performing contemporaneously the functions (fortunately not very onerous) of Coningsby, Sidonia, Tancred, and we know not how many others. We are quite confident that we detect him as Mr. Leander, the culinary artist of the New Crusade. In the same manner, Eugene Aram, of whom the last penalty of the law would seem to have rid us in a constitutional and thorough manner, reappears again as Zanoni, and we afterwards find that he had in the meanwhile imposed himself on a too facile public as something new, under the several *aliases* of Paul Clifford, Pelham, and Maltravers. To be sure, as Zanoni, he offers a lame kind of apology for his conduct, by professing to have discovered the *aurum potabile*; but he can hardly expect to escape much longer the vigilance of the literary police.

The distinguished authors from whom our examples have

been taken seem to have forgotten, in their familiarity with this patriarchal tenacity of life, the impoverished and more limited date of their readers. They have unconsciously adapted themselves, in the profusion of their works and the rapidity with which one follows another, to a style of living which finds its nearest modern parallel in the famous Countess of Desmond,

“Who lived to the age of a hundred and ten,  
And died by a fall from an apple-tree then.”

The writing of books of this kind is comparatively an easy matter, but the reading demands a more liberal outlay of energy and persistency. Had the crowning labor of Hercules been to keep pace with the pen of an author like Mr. G. P. R. James, he would probably not even yet have seen his name gazetted for a place on Olympus. It is possible, that, among the improvements of science, a machine may be invented for the more rapid perusal of this kind of literature. Delusive hopes have sometimes been awakened in us by seeing advertisements of “Reading made easy.” Babbage’s calculating-machine supplies very creditably, in scientific circles, the places of some score of mathematicians, but the remedy for our especial complaint is not to be found in the pharmacopœia of mechanics. The great want of an age always foretells, and in some sort defines, its great invention; and we may therefore look pretty confidently for the speedy introduction of a labor-saving engine, which shall meet the demands of an overworked public. Formerly, authors were more considerate. It is plain that Richardson calculated his Sir Charles Grandison for the longest period of years attainable in his day. No other reason is assignable for the story’s ending where it does, or indeed at all. To a lover of statistics there is something touching in a concession like this to the tables of longevity. The matter assumes something of a grand and Roman aspect, when we picture to ourselves the Stoical conscientiousness with which he brought his work to an end, lest any reader, who might fall a little short of the required period, should miss the conclusion, and die feeling defrauded of his proper pennyworth.

We cannot be expected to give any thing more than a meagre sketch of the interesting race of beings of whom we were treating at the other end of our digression, and to whose consideration we now return. It may be well to premise,

that, besides the particular names with which they are labelled for the sake of convenient distinction (a precaution rendered necessary by their singular family-likeness one to another), they are also known by one universal patronymic. Each male is called a Hero, and each female a Heroine. It may be, that, in common with all races who have achieved eminence, they ascribe to themselves a mythical inception. Generally, the fable typified the character of the people. The she-wolf's milk would not out of the Roman blood, and the Athenian could trace the transmitted qualities of his ancestral grasshopper in his own fickle and mercurial temperament. The tribe under consideration may claim an origin in the famous intimacy of Hero and Leander, assuming the name of its maternal ancestor, according to the principles of the common law, for want of a marriage certificate. The early demise of Hero furnishes no valid argument against this theory. Every day we see genealogists of enthusiasm and fortitude cheerfully surmounting far more serious obstacles. At least, if this be not the true solution of the problem, a just deference to the principles of language will allow us to seek it nowhere else. No recognized definition of the word "Hero" will meet the wants of the case.

It has been assumed too rashly by ethical writers, that no race of men can be found among whom there does not exist some idea, however rude, of a deity, a future state of existence, and a moral law. Wilson detected traces of a sense of justice even among martins; and we remember reading in some book of travels an account of a funeral procession of apes, concluding with an *éloge* pronounced at the grave by a distinguished member of the Simial Academy, — which learned body, like other foreign scientific and literary societies, has doubtless its corresponding members in the United States, though we have hitherto failed to detect its *insignia* in the mystical abbreviations of title-page literature, or in the Ciceronian Latin of college catalogues. However this may be, we have been unable to find any distinct recognition of a God or a code of morals among the peculiar people whose habits we are investigating. The only symptom of respect even for the prejudices of society which they exhibit is to be found in their almost invariably claiming a descent from some ancient and generally noble family. It is not impossible that the goddess Vacuna may be worshipped among them.

They are generally said to be learned and philosophical ; but the possession of these qualities hardly comports with their habits of life, and the story wants ampler confirmation than we have yet seen. It certainly is not at all sustained by any of their reported speeches or deeds.

If what we have surmised of their longevity be true, it will elucidate another circumstance otherwise mysterious. We allude to the indefiniteness of their ideas concerning time. Those little items in the expenditure of this precious commodity, over which a man would hesitate whose income was determinable by the seignioral whim of death, are quite lightly esteemed by those whose lives are not dependent on the ordinary contingencies of mortality. Thus, in their books, we constantly meet with statements like this : — “ On a fine afternoon in the year 16—, a youth whose &c. &c. *might* bespeak him to be of the age of twenty-five or thereabout ” ; — or, “ On a breezy September afternoon in the year 18—, a man whose immaculate boots suitably terminated a costume of singular &c. &c. *might have been seen*.” In this way we are provokingly arrested on the very threshold of precise knowledge, and the conditional expression leaves us in a painful state of suspense. Every thing becomes at once vague and phantasmal, like the banquet of a Lamia, and the illusory viands which had satisfied our intellectual appetites, as long as we partook of them in good faith, gripe us with a retrospective starvation.

Several physiological peculiarities are sufficiently well established in regard to the subjects of our somewhat erratic investigation. We know theoretically that all mankind naturally behold objects reversed, and only correct this apparently needless optical ceremony by an unconscious act of reason. This process of reasoning is rejected by these people as superfluous and artificial ; and there is something not unrefreshing to a mind accustomed to our conventional distinctions in noting the impressions and studying the mental habits of those to whom all objects, especially in morals, present themselves invariably upside down. While upon the subject of optics, we may remark, also, that their looks always contain a volume of meaning (certainly not one of the volumes of either of the famous authors from whom we chiefly draw our information), a compensation doubtless intended by even-handed Nature to make up for the preternatural

vacuity of their speech. One other fact is singular enough to be commented on here. All their male children are born with silver spoons in their mouths. This accounts for their always marrying heiresses, or succeeding to immense estates early in life, and throws all the responsibility for a seemingly unequal distribution of material blessings upon the ample shoulders of natural causes. It has been supposed by many, that these curious appendages of nativity are ladles, or at least spoons of more Homeric dimensions than any we are familiar with. This may, however, be merely a theoretic adaptation of antecedent to consequence, arising from an effort of logical minds to graduate the size of the spoon to the amount of the luck contingent upon it. It should never be forgotten, that this sublime species are not amenable to any of those influences which are dominant in our more limited organizations. Certain it is, that none of them possess the happy faculty of being poor. No translation would make intelligible to them the

“vitæ tuta facultas  
Pauperis.”

We have not been able to discover that they devote themselves to any of the professions which are considered reputable among us. The life of a brigand is clearly not liable to reproach among them, and they not infrequently present examples of dandies with immeasurable aspirations, æsthetic assassins, and thieves from a devotion to the sublime and beautiful. Within a few years they have begun to adapt themselves to the general tendency toward Reform; and here they have exhibited an almost celestial unselfishness, appropriating all their efforts to the defects of their neighbours, and leaving their own to divine interposition and providential ravens. Their women differ not greatly from the other sex. Perhaps the profound author of “*Woman in the Nineteenth Century*” designed to typify them under the class of women of “electric organizations,” concerning whom she utters many mysterious oracles. Perhaps the laws of this phenomenal society forbade her being more definite. In Silliman’s *Journal* there was published, several years ago, an account of a lady in Vermont who emitted sparks whenever she approached any metallic substance. A closer analysis of this case might possibly throw some light on the matter.

It may be, that there is no particular locality inhabited by this interesting tribe, where they constitute a distinct people, governed by their own laws, and free to carry out their own principles of action. It has sometimes occurred to us, that they might possibly exist among ourselves, like the Jews in Spain, or like the brethren of the mysterious Vehm and of the Rose Cross in Germany, subjecting our more commonplace existence to the criterion of their sublimer ideal. They resemble the Rosicrucians in using a kind of cryptography totally destitute of meaning to the unilluminated eye, but differ from them again in regard to the sacred numbers, holding only Number One in peculiar veneration. We have fancied sometimes, that we could detect, in the countenances of young gentlemen who measured us a yard of tape, what would be called by their cabalistic writers a mysterious something, indicating a sense of awful responsibility, and a half-melancholy, half-contemptuous superiority to the drudgery whose convenient disguise they have assumed. It is not unlikely, that members of the guild may be found among that lazzaroni class of our population who fish from the bridges and wharves, or more probably in those who watch and criticize the piscatory endeavours of others. This surmise finds confirmation in their entire want of any useful employment whatever, in their use of a dialect semi-unintelligible to the ordinary hearer, and their sublime indifference to those limited theories of government and reform which obtain in the community of which they consent to appear members. Their hands are commonly thrust deep into their pockets, as if in contemptuous defiance of the primal curse, or in tacit assumption of some higher than an Adamite original. Their costume, also, is at once negligent and graceful, and less indicative of a slavish dependence upon the tailor, than of the inventive embroideries of private taste and original views in art. — But we must leave this tempting theme, and let ourselves down gradually to the subject of our present article.

The palmy days of the novel are gone for ever. Its age is passed, like that of chivalry, whose decadence Burke could lament, but whose precise place in history he would have been puzzled to define. The world is not what it was when Byron wrote to England for the last Scotch novel, and lazy Coleridge felt grumblingly constrained to read it by a kind of *Ancient Mariner's* spell. The invention of printing, which



brought down the apple of knowledge within the reach of all, seems to have entailed likewise upon mankind a laborious curse akin to that which ensued from the original bite, and it is only within a few years that men have begun to ask themselves why they read. The patience of mankind in this particular makes Job no longer exceptional. "Chappelow on Job" is a sorer trial than ever visited the patriarch himself. A modern degeneracy wonders at the heroic age which took "*Calvinus in Prophetas*" and "*Vitringa in Esaiam*" as matters of course. That men should have conquered Dwight's Conquest of Canaan seems now as prodigious a thing as the great achievement of Cortés himself; and the journal of some worthy Bernal Diaz who took part in the enterprise would be an interesting record of devotion and courage. We ourselves once, infected with Wertherism, began to peruse Morse on Suicide, as a convenient, and not inadequate, substitute for the thing itself. We are apt to look upon such books as the megatheria of literature; but the race of dodos survives to connect us with an otherwise extinct epoch. Have we not our commentators upon Shakespeare? Have we not our almost hourly novels? Have we not our periodic inflictions, from the daily newspaper up to the quarterly, the multicaulis of the species? Nevertheless, the reign of the novelists was over, like that of the Barbary corsairs, as soon as Christendom began to inquire whether there was any foreordained necessity for submitting to their exactions. Literature has taken what is called a useful direction, and the romantic fiction of the traveller is gradually crowding out that of the novelist.

In point of fact, also, the gradual exclusion of the novelist from the improbable, and his confinement to the region of every-day life, amount to a kind of prohibitory statute against all but men of genuine creative power. We can show nothing now that will compare in kind with the romantic dreams of our ancestors. The exploration and settlement of this Western world, while they have added myriads to the circle of the story-teller, have at the same time robbed romance of one of its widest and most enticing fields. The age of expectation is past. It is true that English travellers among us have endeavoured to ignore the silent flight of centuries and the uncompromising advance of exact knowledge, and have continued to write in the imaginative strain of those voyagers

who adventured at a period when geography and general science were in a state of more fortunate obscurity. But the mariner no longer hoists confident sail for El Dorado. No Ponce de Leon ravishes the virgin silence of embowered rivers in believing search for the fountain of youth, a fountain in whose existence the ever-young fancy of that unskeptical age might almost tempt us to put faith. No English crew, trailing with sleepy canvas through those sun-steeped seas,

“Where the remote Bermudas ride  
In the ocean’s bosom unespied,”

can dream of the Marquis of the Valley, and of empires overrun by a handful of Buccaneers, with any substantial hope of emulating that Aladdin-like fortunateness, nor can they bring home tales out of which such “golden exhalations of the dawn” as Ariel can be created. Stephens, to be sure, with a praiseworthy endeavour after such precious credulity, tells stories of undiscovered cities in Central America, incapable of entrapping our boys of the lowest form. The discovery of a new plant, bird, or insect is the sole reward of modern adventure. We must perforce be content that an addition to our authentic Flora or Fauna shall repay us for the loss we suffer in the diminished empire of the unknown and mysterious. The mere potential possession of those wondrous efficacies which were once believed to dwell in plants and minerals, of those untraversed empires ribbed with gold which waited for conquerors, was in itself a great estate to be born to, the loss of which finds but a beggarly compensation in any accession of preciser science. The index to Browne’s *Vulgar Errors* is a meagre inventory of those vast possessions out of which the advance of knowledge has juggled us. Even among the stars, speculation is no longer safe. The astronomer, drifting on his telescope through the sea of space, finds every gleaming continent, every nebulous Polynesian group, already taken possession of in the name of some European power.

The present age, we are constantly assured, is an age of criticism and inquiry, quite barren of the beautiful, childlike faith of the bygone time. We are well content that it should be so, while we can see a higher and more saving grace gradually unfolding itself. We shall not feel that there is any loss, so long as a faith in the present and the future, in man and his true destiny, takes the place of the old religion.

Out of the decay of no system can we reproduce its original type. There is nourishment only for a fungous and inferior life. One epoch is but the sheath which envelopes and protects the flower-bud of the next ; the expanding blossom detrudes it. Experience may be the best schoolmaster, but where is the instance in history of a generation in whom his birch implanted any wisdom ? At best, his qualities are negative, and he teaches rather what to avoid than what to do. Yet there is in England a political party, or a spasmodic attempt at one, based upon the dogma that all salvation dwells in the past. Mr. D'Israeli the younger is one of the Coryphæi of this sect, and *Tancred* is one of its canonical books. It calls itself " Young England," and we should be inclined to consider it very young indeed, if we might judge by the clearest apprehension we have been able to attain of the principles by which it professes to be governed. It claims to be the friend of reform, but seems to look upon progress as something of the same nature with the refractory charge of an Irish pig-driver, and pulls it back stoutly by the leg in a direction precisely the reverse of that in which it would have it advance. Coningsby, Sibyl, and *Tancred* are samples of its literature. Of its Parliamentary oratory the staple seems to be a series of assaults upon Sir Robert Peel for the wisest act of his life, in yielding to the progress of events. These onslaughts are of the style usually called " withering " ; but from his remarks on the Irish question, we should suppose the late Premier to be as verdant as ever.

The " Young England " party is apparently made up of something like a dozen middle-aged gentlemen, either members of Parliament, or conceiving themselves eminently adapted for a seat in that assembly. They are persuaded that there has been, at some time or other (they are somewhat vague on this point), a golden age in England. They are satisfied that John Bull must be made a boy again, that all work and no play have made Jack a dull boy. But in what Medea's caldron they would boil the allegorical old gentleman we are not informed. That the result of the experiment would not be more fortunate than that of the daughters of Pelias, we can readily believe. They do not define exactly the happy oasis in the desert of history to which they would return. Perhaps it may be located not far from the

time of the publication of the *Book of Sports*. They would restore the happy days of the peasantry, by setting them to climb greased poles, or race in sacks. An occasional game of skittles would at once elevate the condition and fill the bellies of the operatives. Squires Butler, Smith, and Cook, otherwise rather unendurable country-gentlemen, would be transformed into liberal and enlightened citizens, as Messrs. Boteler, Smythe, and Coke. Hollow-cheeked want and abysmal ignorance, in a frieze jacket and corduroy smalls, would become plump satiety and Arcadian simplicity, in a doublet and hose. They seem all to have been born under the dominance of Cancer, and, walking steadfastly backward, would persuade us, like Cacus, to take the direction of their footprints as ample evidence of an advance the other way. They have an appearance of wisdom sufficient to captivate the greener sort of boys. The enunciation of the simplest fact wears with them the air of a discovery, and the words must begin with capitals to be adequate to the occasion. They suppose an ignorance in their readers which would perhaps have overtaxed that humility of the old philosopher who considered his education complete when he had learned at last that he knew nothing. They talk of absolute principles as familiarly as a snob quotes his distinguished acquaintances, his nearest intimacy with whom, perhaps, has been the writing to them for an autograph and getting no reply. They criticize the present condition of affairs, and, when asked for a remedy, their answer is as satisfactory as that with which contemptuous boys refer the snowballed passer-by, who proves refractory, to the town-pump for sympathy and redress. They find the pulse of the body politic alarming, and prescribe ten drops of the tincture of the Middle Ages. Alas for poor Sancho, if once seduced into a trial of this Quixotic balsam! Is Ireland starving? They would order iron, by way of tonic, and prevent any recurrence of unfavorable symptoms by a strong infusion of railroads, beginning nowhere, running nowhere else, and carrying nothing but a conviction of the imbecility of government. Like a barometer from an auction-sale, they inflexibly indicate a storm brewing, nor can any length of sunshine avail to mollify their contumacious vaticination of foul weather. They have a prodigious command of phrases. They affirm this and that, and deny the other, of any given subject, and, after wholly

bemuddling the too trustful reader, who, with open mouth and shut eyes, sincerely expects something to make him wise, complete their victory and his mortification by naming the process a rigorous analysis, — emulating the hardihood of that equestrian nominalist who

“ Stuck a feather in his hat  
And called it macaroni.”

They overwhelm us with “ objective ” and “ subjective,” with “ combinations,” “ problems,” and “ developments,” till we are fain to believe in our own ignorance rather than credit the boldness and profundity of theirs. They are of the school of Diphilus the Labyrinth, whom we met once in Lucian's *Lapithæ*. Their truths are invariably stranger than any but their own fictions. Their method of argument reminds one of my Lord Humevesne's plea : — “ If the iniquity of men were as easily seen in categorical judgment as we can discern flies in a milk-pot, the world's four oxen had not been so eaten up with rats, nor had so many ears upon the earth been nibbled away so scurvily.” They, however, do not appear to have undergone any such auricular curtailment. They profess an entire confidence in the efficacy of Faith, and charge all the world's troubles to a backsliding in that particular. This Faith they seem to regard as something capable of manufacture, and not beyond the cunning of Manchester or Sheffield. Their best type in America is Mr. Brownson (*male tutæ mentis Orestes*), who, nailing at length his weary weathercock to the mast, and gulping down with an equable countenance œcumenical councils, cardinals, popes, whole hecatombs of papal bulls, and (more than all) his own previous writings, would persuade the public, by an exhibition of his own marvellous feats in that kind, to the more hazardous experiment of swallowing himself and his pretensions.

But Mr. D'Israeli is not a gentleman of sufficiently assured position to wait patiently in the antechamber, and it is time that we should apply ourselves personally to him. He is a great believer in the idiosyncrasies of race, and the peculiar tendencies and faculties implanted in the different families of mankind. He himself furnishes an unconscious illustration of his own theory. Seldom has the inner life been so aptly symbolized in the outward as in the case of the Jews. That the idolaters of ceremony and tradition should

become the venders of old clothes, that the descendants of those who, within earshot of the thunders of Sinai, could kneel before the golden calf, should be the money-changers of Europe, has in it something of syllogistic completeness. The work by which the elder D'Israeli will be remembered is the old curiosity shop of literature. He is merely a cast-clothes-dealer in an æsthetic sense. The son, with his trumpery of the past, is clearly a vender of the same wares, and an offshoot from the same stock.

In Coningsby and Tancred, Mr. D'Israeli has interwoven a kind of defence of the Jewish race against the absurd prejudices of a so-called Christendom. The Arab proves his unmixed descent by the arch of his instep; and, unless we conclude men mad as sturdy old Burton argues them, we must suppose that the pleasurable sensation of pedigree has somewhere its peculiar organ in the human frame. With proper deference to the opinions of other physiologists, we should be inclined to place the seat of this emotion in the Caucasian race near the region of the toes. Tribes of this stock, at least, have always seemed to consider the keeping of somebody or other to kick as at once a proof of purity of lineage, and a suitable gratification of those nobler instincts which it implants. In Europe, the Jews have long monopolized the responsible privilege of supplying an object for this peculiar craving of the supreme Caucasian nature. The necessity of each rank in society found a vent upon that next below it, the diapason ending full in the Jew; and thus a healthy feeling of dignity was maintained from one end of the body politic to the other. In America, the African supplies the place of the Hebrew, and the sturdiest champion of impartial liberty feels the chromatic scale of equal rights violated when the same steam is employed to drag him and his darker fellow-citizen. Civilization has made wonderful advances since the apostle Philip mounted the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch. It must be remembered, however, that Ethiopians do not keep chariots nowadays.

For once, Mr. D'Israeli seems to be in earnest, and we respect both his zeal and the occasion of it. The pen is never so sacred as when it takes the place of the sword in securing freedom, whether for races or ideas. But the earnestness of a charlatan is only a profounder kind of charla-

tanism. The moral of *Tancred*, if it have any, is, that effete Europe can be renewed only by a fresh infusion from the veins of Asia, — a nostrum for rejuvenescence to be matched only out of the pages of *Hermippus Redivivus*. According to Mr. D'Israeli, all primitive ideas have originated, and must for ever originate, in Asia, and among the descendants of Abraham. He would have us go to school to Noah in navigation, and learn the nicer distinctions of *meum* and *tuum* from Ishmael. He would make us believe that the Jewish mind still governs the world, through the medium of prime-ministers, bankers, and actresses. The chief excellence of this arrangement is, that we are profoundly ignorant of it. We are provided for by the supreme Arabian intellect, and at the same time have all the pleasure of imagining that we manage our own affairs. The dispersion of the Jews (a nation so eminently successful in controlling their own political interests) was no doubt intended by Providence to supply Christendom with administrative intellects.

In simple truth, it seems to have been a provision of nature that divine ideas should have been committed to the Jews, as great fortunes come to unthrift heirs, because they were unable to keep possession of them. The world is indeed too much governed by the Jewish mind, though not in the sense Mr. D'Israeli intended. Instead of the absolute truth, it accepts the corrupt Hebrew gloss. The Jews were never able to look an organic truth full in the face. They could not even behold clearly the countenance of their first great lawgiver, for the brightness that encompassed it; much less could they discern the more purely effulgent lineaments of Jesus. The Gospels are still too often read backward, after the Hebrew fashion.

Mr. D'Israeli would be more endurable, if he himself thoroughly believed in the theory he promulgates. But it is evident that he only assumes his position for the sake of writing what one half of May Fair shall pronounce brilliant, and the other half profound. An original kind of originality has lately been discovered, which consists in asserting sheer nonsense, and then compassionating the incredulous reader's want of brains. The old scientific writers used to define white as *disgregativum visûs*, something which dissipated and puzzled the sight. A kind of writing has obtained of late which realizes this definition. It is called the brilliant style,

and has at least this property of brilliancy, that the eye strives in vain to settle upon and clutch any definite object. The natural philosopher would be posed to find a substance in which the mass bore so small a proportion to the volume, or, to speak more properly, the number of volumes. It is painful reading. The wearied attention can alight nowhere. Getting through books constructed on this principle is like crossing a stream upon blocks of ice, each one of which admits of being skimmed lightly over, but where a pause insures hopeless submersion. Arrived on the other side, we have no distinct consciousness except of being over, and can only congratulate ourselves upon our happy preservation. It is a feat which demands as much presence of mind in the reader as it implies an absence of that quality in the writer. When such productions are called works of fiction, we cannot complain of being cheated. They have been subjected to no natural period of gestation, and acknowledge no received laws of birth. They are constructed after the manner of Paracelsus's *homunculus*, and are as near of kin to true works of art as the trees in apothecaries' jars are to the pines on Katahdin. There is enough artifice, but no art. Dryden, in a letter to Dennis, says, — "I remember poor Nat Lee, who was upon the verge of madness, yet made a sober and witty answer to a bad poet who told him, 'It was an easy thing to write like a madman.' 'No,' said he, 't is very difficult to write like a madman, but 't is a very easy thing to write like a fool.'"

We should not be so severe in our exactions of the novel, except that it no longer professes to amuse, but to instruct. This is the age of lectures. Even Punch has got into the professor's chair, and donned the doctor's cap. The novel has become a quack advertisement in three volumes. Formerly, we could detect the political economist at a reasonable distance, and escape him by a well-contrived dodge. Now, no sanctuary is inviolate. Adam Smith gets us inexorably by the button in the corner of some shilling novel, and Malthus entraps us from behind the unsuspected ambush of the last new poem. Even the tragic Muse drops her mask, and behold, Mr. Ricardo! It is getting past endurance. Chandler's History of Persecution supplies no instance more atrocious. The novelist has turned *colporteur* to some board of political missions, and the propagandist of every phi-



losophical soup-and-bread society assumes the disguise of a poet. The times are wellnigh as bad as those a century and a half ago, when our forefathers were fain to carry their firelocks to meeting. Everywhere are surprisals. One cannot saunter down what were once the green lanes or deep withdrawn woodpaths of literature, without being set upon by a whooping band of savages, who knock one on the head with the balance of trade, or tomahawk one with merciless statistics. Everywhere pure literature seems defunct. Art for the sole sake of art is no more. Beauty is no longer "its own excuse for being." It must have a certificate of membership from the Anti-something or Anti-everything Alliance.

Let us not be misapprehended. Divine is the marriage of beauty and use; them God hath joined. The crowning and consummate grace of the Muse is the pouring of wine and oil. She has walked before every higher aspiration, every more generous hope of humanity. Fetters which the dumb tears of ages have not availed to rust in twain have fallen asunder at her look. What she has done has been from a beautiful necessity of her nature. But a Muse with an enforced sense of duty! A Muse in a Quaker bonnet! A Muse who quotes McCulloch! *Quousque tandem?* And the only consolation vouchsafed us is that ours is an age of transition. Let those draw comfort from the thought of belonging to the miocene period who are capable of such cosmogonic satisfactions. To us, it is no relief that we shall have our shelf hereafter in the geologist's cabinet; we covet no fossil immortality.

Mr. D'Israeli began his literary career as an amusing writer merely. He was no unmeet Homer for a dandy Achilles, whose sublime was impertinence. His Vivian Grey, no doubt, made some score of Sophomores intolerable in the domestic circle; his Young Duke tempted as many Freshmen to overrun their incomes. Nature is said to love a balance of qualities or properties, and to make up always for a deficiency in one place by an excess in some other. But our experience of mankind would incline us to doubt the possible existence of so large a number of modest men as would account for the intensity of Mr. D'Israeli's vicarious atonement. It is painful to conceive of an amount of bashfulness demanding such a counterpoise of assurance. It would seem that he must have borrowed brass, that he must be support-

ing his lavish expenditures *ære alieno*, when he assumes the philosopher, and undertakes to instruct.

His "New Crusade" can be undertaken by no one short of a duke's only son. It would doubtless be considered a highly revolutionary interference with the vested rights of the aristocracy to allow so great a privilege to a commoner. Tancred is a young gentleman of extraordinary genius and acquirements, just coming of age when the novel opens. His father, the Duke of Bellamont, wishes him to enter Parliament, but he has already resolved on undertaking a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Fathers are among the inconvenient necessities of our fallen nature, but an unmanly yielding to them is not one of the weaknesses of the "New Generation." It is probable that they would not be put up with at all, were it not for certain facilities they afford as bankers. Young England respects the fathers of the church vastly more than its own. Tancred, of course, has his own way, and the Duke surrenders at discretion.

The old painters wrote under their honest, but often unsatisfactory, attempts at imitating nature the names of the objects they intended to represent. The moderns have a convenient fetch to accomplish the same end, by means of descriptive catalogues, so that we can assure ourselves at once, that this indescribable phenomenon is the "portrait of a gentleman," and that inscrutably dark canvas, with a dab of white putty in the centre, is "*after Rembrandt*," and can form our own conclusions as to whether it is likely to overtake him. This expedient, as it were, shifts the burden of proof, and taxes rather the imagination and faith of the beholder than the skill of the artist. Yet even here a kind of remote verisimilitude is demanded. Mr. D'Israeli forgets this. He assures us that he is about to introduce a most extraordinary man, a kind of admirabler Crichton. We prepare our minds adequately for the encounter, and then—enter Mr. Sidonia. We are reminded of a placard we once saw, announcing the rather anomalous exhibition of "Colonel Spofford, the *great* Virginia dwarf." We are outraged at so Barmecide a fulfilment of a bill of fare which would have made even Mrs. Glasse search her coffers round. We had always conceived of nature as somewhat economical and housewifely in her management, expending nothing but for some adequate return. What object she could

have had in endowing Mr. Sidonia with so many rare and exceptional qualities, we are at a loss to discover. He talks and acts very much like any other quite ordinary person. His vast faculties seem as superfluous as the five horses which the circus-rider contrives to use at the same time, when one would serve his turn as well. Shakspeare wrote on quite another system. He lets us know, indeed, that Hamlet is "fat and scant o' breath," but leaves Hamlet's genius to speak for itself. Mr. D'Israeli is like the Irish gastronomer, who invited his friends to partake of a rich soup which he was to concoct out of a miraculous pebble. The entertainer liberally placed his whole mineralogical cabinet at the service of his guests, merely asking of each in return a *pro ratâ* contribution of a bit of beef, a trifle of pork, a few onions, a sprinkling of salt, and a kettle wherein to try the thaumaturgic experiment. Mr. D'Israeli's characters are such wonderful pebbles. It is quite too heavy a tax upon the reader to expect him to fill up, with their appropriate lights and shades, the colossal outlines sketched by the author.

Tancred is one of these remarkable men, but there is nothing very remarkable in what he says or does. In the same way that old Gower enters as Chorus, and gives us to understand that we are now in Tyre, Mr. D'Israeli begs to inform us that we are now to enjoy the privilege of communion with a mind capable of vast "combinations." But Tyre turns out to be the same little canvas castle which was Tharsus a moment ago, and the vast combinations amount to the adding of two and two, and producing the surprising result of four. We had calculated upon ten, at the very least. Tancred goes to the Holy Land to fathom the great "Asiatic problem," carrying, one cannot help fearing, a line hardly long enough for the purpose. Arrived there, he pays his devotion to the Holy Sepulchre, undertakes a pilgrimage to Mount Sinai, is taken prisoner by a tribe of Arabs descended from Rechab (the temperance reform may be allegorically typified in this incident), is liberated, visits the Ansarey, a somewhat anserine people who maintain the worship of the Grecian divinities, and the novel ends by his declaring his love for the daughter of his Jew banker in Palestine. The conclusion is characteristic. Mr. D'Israeli, like the cat transformed into a lady, drops all ceremony at once,

and makes a joyous spring after the first mouse he encounters. The novelist gets the better of the philosopher.

If the book were intended as a satire, the end would be pertinent enough. But in the present case, it is as if a man, with infinite din of preparation, should set sail for a voyage round the world, and get no farther than a chowder on Spectacle island. At the beginning of the novel, we nerve ourselves for the solution of the great Asiatic problem, and, as long as *X* remains an unknown quantity, we feel a vague sort of respect for it. But when we arrive at the end of the demonstration, and Mr. D'Israeli, after covering the blackboard with figures enough to work out the position of the new planet, turns round to us, and, laying down his triumphant chalk, says gravely, — "Thus, Gentlemen, you will perceive that the square of the hypotenuse, &c., &c., Q. E. D.," we feel as if we might have found our way over the *pons asinorum* without paying him so heavy a fee as guide. He finds a prototype in Lilly the astrologer, who, commending his own calling, asserts roundly, that "the study required in that kind of learning must be sedentary, of great reading, sound judgment, which no man can accomplish except he wholly retire, use prayer, and accompany himself with angelical visitations." This impresses us considerably, till we reflect that all this machinery is put in motion, not to produce a *Novum Organon*, but to track a stolen spoon, or to estimate the chances of recovering an absconded sixpence.

The value of any book, after all, is not in the entertainment it affords for the nonce, though this is something, but in the permanent residuum left in the mind after reading. The times are too much in earnest for abandonment to simple recreation. Were this not so, the imitations of Punch, at which, would answer the same purpose as Punch itself, with which we laugh. The solid residuum we speak of depends upon the amount of thinking which the book has demanded of us. That which the old epitaph affirms of worldly goods holds true here also, — what we gave we have. The intellect seeks food, and would reject all the pearls in the world for a single grain of corn. Art is only conscious nature, and nature has always her ulterior views, creating nothing but with an eye to some desired result. But Tancred cannot be esteemed a work of art, even if that term may be justly

applied in the limited sense of mere construction. There is in it no great living idea which pervades, moulds, and severely limits the whole. If we consider the *motive*, we find a young nobleman so disgusted with the artificial and hollow life around him, that he sacrifices every thing for a pilgrimage to what he believes the only legitimate source of faith and inspiration. We cannot, to be sure, expect much of a youth who is obliged to travel a thousand miles after inspiration ; but we might reasonably demand something more than that he should merely fall in love, a consummation not less conveniently and cheaply attainable at home. If the whole story be intended for a satire, the disproportion of motive to result is not out of proper keeping. But Mr. D'Israeli's satire is wholly of the epigrammatic kind, not of the epic, and deals always with individuals, never with representative ideas. An epigram in three volumes post octavo is out of the question. The catastrophe has no moral or æsthetic fitness. Indeed, there is no principle of cohesion about the book, if we except the covers. Nor could there be ; for there is no one central thought around and toward which the rest may gravitate. All that binds the incidents together is the author's will, a somewhat inadequate substitute for a law of nature. Every thing slips through our fingers like a handful of sand, when we grasp for a design. A true work of art is like a tree. Its shape, its law of growth, its limit, is irrevocably foreordained in the seed. There is no haphazard in the matter, from beginning to end. The germ once planted, every thing then tends simply to the bringing about of one end, — perfection in its kind. The plot which it has to fill out is definite and rigid. The characters and incidents balance each other like the branches, and every part, from the minutest fibre of the root to the least leaf, conspires to nourishment and so to beauty. The grand, yet simple poise, the self-possession, so to speak, is what impresses us with a sense of dignity and permanence. We come to criticize it, and feel as if brought before it to be criticized rather. It turns the tables upon us and demands our credentials. But to call upon Mr. D'Israeli for a work of art is to set a joiner to build an oak.

For want of due discrimination, such writers as Mr. D'Israeli are called *imaginative* authors. It is the same narrow view which has confined the name of poets to the

makers of verse. Imagination is truly the highest exercise of that august faculty from which it is vulgarly esteemed so distant, — namely, reason. It is the instinctive (if we may so call it, in the absence of any readier term) perception of remote analogies ; in other words, of the unity of truth. It has been said of Shakspeare, the greatest imagination in the history of literature, that as much reasoning faculty was required for the production of one of his dramas as for that of the *Novum Organon*. According to our view of the matter, Bacon's great work indicates the presence of an imagination only second to that which found its natural outlet in Hamlet and Lear. Many examples, were it necessary, might be brought to prove that the great mathematical or scientific mind is not so different in kind from the poetical as is generally taken for granted. It will be enough if we merely mention Pascal and Davy. The theory had its rise among a race of third-rate rhymers, who found it convenient to persuade the world that the payment of debts and the possession of genius were two luxuries whose simultaneous enjoyment was impossible. A generation which tolerated such poets might easily be put off with such crambo stuff for philosophy. Swedenborg, whose imaginative powers will hardly be questioned, is just beginning to be understood as the profoundest scientific writer of his age. Any one who reads him will perceive that he is wholly wanting in fancy. Voltaire, a writer of pure fancy, with no trace of imagination, and whose mind therefore detected incongruities well enough, but could never rise to the perception of harmonic laws, naturally applied to Shakspeare the ludicrous epithet of *bizarre*. The same term would have served him equally well for the solar system. Imagination made the one, when he chose, a great satirist. Fancy, which places side by side in piquant comparison remotely allied images, not ideas, made the other, whether he would or no, a great epigrammatist.

Imagination has been truly and wisely named “ the shaping spirit.” It is this that gives unity to the otherwise formless mass, and inspires it with one decisive and harmonious will. Without it there may be great power, but no unity, — only agglomeration. Herein lies the distinction between Shakspeare and Marlowe. The latter is commonly labelled by the critics as a poet of wild and lawless imagination, a definition

which seems to us as idle as if one should say a wild and lawless definition. For nothing is great or beautiful which is lawless, and we must be careful that we do not name that so which is truly subjected to some law so high or so refined as to transcend or elude the ordinary apprehension. The imagination acts within certain prescribed and absolute limits, and we believe that in all literature no instance of its pure exercise can be adduced, which is not at the same time an example of the highest reason. We do not mean to assert a paradox when we say that the versification of Shakspeare often displays imagination, while the sentiment embodied in it is purely fanciful ; since it is this faculty which gives form, and subjects expression to those higher principles of order and unity of which fancy is altogether incapable. It is from a want of fixed ideas as to the operations of this attribute of the profoundest intellect, that the fallacy of great wit being nearly allied to madness has arisen. For the imagination necessarily oversteps the narrow limits which circumscribe the general mind, and therefore seems something abnormal and erratic. A more exact astronomy teaches that the long ellipse of the comet is governed by principles as exact, and characterized by periods as uniform, as the seemingly more regular planetary orbits. The mental organization of great reformers has imagination for its basis, but in them it is rather a quality than a faculty, and they are convicted of being men of one idea by a populace which is often not fortunate enough to possess even one, because they are constantly testing what is by what ought to be, and subjecting the fugitive forms of society, in which Truth disguises herself for a time, to the touchstone of absolute reason.

There is a kind of criticism which judges books by their own aim, and which answers very well where the having any definite intent may be predicated of the book in hand. But this has been perverted from its true scope to cover the defects of every false and empty school of literature that has ever arisen. It is then called liberal criticism, a term which, like liberal Christianity, often means either a very illiberal criticism or none at all. Thus plentifully infused with water, the test is applied, and accommodately indicates the presence of whatever quality is desired. It is like the gimlet of Mephistopheles, and draws wine of any predetermined color and taste out of the woodenest things. An author is pro-

nounced brilliant, profound, fascinating, or what not, and is never asked that most important question, the answer to which can alone determine his right to be an author at all, — Do you *mean* any thing? No distinction is made between bookwrights who write because they choose, and those who write because they were born to that precise avocation and no other. If a book be merely the safety-valve for that superfluous activity which might have found an equally satisfactory outlet in the manufacture of a shoe, it is no book at all, and no criticism, how liberal soever, can make it any thing other than so many pages of printed paper. The truth is, that the phrase liberal criticism is purely a misnomer. There can be no such thing, any more than there can be a liberal inch or a liberal ell. Nor, on the other hand, can there, in strict definition, be such a thing as illiberal criticism. If it incline either way from rigid justice, it is either eulogy or detraction. We might as truly call that a balance where short measure is made full by a thread run through the counter. Criticism is the unbiased application of certain well-defined and self-existent principles of judgment, and the first question to be put to a book is, whether it satisfies any want of the time, or, better still, any want of human nature which knows no time, or whether it were honestly intended so to do. They who cry out for liberal criticism are like those worthy Poundtexts who went about proclaiming the accession of King Jesus when they were really only the unconscious heralds of King Log, they, of course, forming the cabinet. Cromwell saw their drift better than they did themselves, and quietly suppressed them before they had a chance to suppress every thing else.

For our own part, we cannot see any use that is to be answered by such books as *Tancred*. It is as dumb as the poor choked hunchback in the *Arabian Nights*, when we ask it what its business is. There are no characters in it. There is no dramatic interest, none of plot or incident. Dickens, with his many and egregious faults of style, his mannerisms, and his sometimes intolerable descriptive passages, is yet clearly enough a great genius, a something necessary to the world, and the figures upon his canvas are such as Emerson has aptly termed *representative*, the types of classes, and no truer in London than in Boston. Mr. D'Israeli, when he undertakes to draw a character, sketches



some individual whom he happens to like or dislike, and who is no otherwise an individual than by the mere accident of being an actually living person, who has a name on the door in some street or other, who eats, drinks, and like the rest of us is subject to death and bores. For example, we perceive that Mr. Vavasour is intended for Mr. R. M. Milnes, an excellent person and no mean poet, but in no way so peculiar and distinct that this sketch of him presents any definite image, except to those who chance to know the individual intended.

In *Tancred* there are one or two excellent landscapes, and some detached thoughts worth remembering. There are a vast many girds at Sir Robert Peel, who, after all is said, has shown himself capable of one thing beyond Mr. D'Israeli's reach, — success, which always gives a man some hold or other, however questionable, upon posterity, and arms him in mail of proof against sarcasm. Mr. D'Israeli uses him as a militia company sometimes serve an unpopular politician. He sets up a rude likeness of him for a practising target ; but, no matter how many balls may perforate the wooden caricature, its original still walks about unharmed, and with whatever capacity a politician has for enjoying life undiminished. We are introduced to some Arabs who talk very much in the style of Mr. Cooper's red men. It seems to be a peculiarity of savages (if we may say it without derogating from the claims of civilization), to utter a variety of nothings in a very grave and sententious way. These, at least, are as solemn and as stupid as allegories on the banks of the Nile, or anywhere else. One of them recites a poem which we fancy will never be translated to a place among the *Moállakát*. But we cannot undertake to give a sketch of the principal events in *Tancred*. Such attempts result usually in something like the good monk's epitome of Homer in the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*. In this particular case, whenever we attempt to call up an individual impression of the book, our memory presents us with nothing but a painfully defiant blur. Moralists tell us, that every man is bound to sustain his share in the weight of the world's sorrows and trials, and we honestly feel as if we had done our part by reading *Tancred*. If our readers have faithfully got to the end of our article, we cry quits.